

# Wilford Woodruff

President of the Church, 1889–98

When Wilford Woodruff heard the testimonies of two missionaries on December 29, 1833, he was quick to recognize the truth and was baptized just two days later. Because of his humility and willingness to serve, he was called “Wilford the Faithful” (see Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* [1974], 101).

He wrote this advice about family harmony to his 19-year-old daughter: “We are expecting to live together forever after death. I think we all as parents and children ought to take all the pains we can to make each other happy as long as we live that we may have nothing to regret” (quoted in Dean C. Jessee, “Wilford Woodruff,” in *The Presidents of the Church*, ed. Leonard J. Arrington [1986], 137).

To the young people he taught: “I feel to exhort and counsel you, my young friends, to listen to the voice of God and obey it while young, as Samuel did, that you may be great, good, and useful, and the beloved of the Lord and your parents. . . . Your eternal destiny for time and eternity, will in a great measure depend upon the foundation which you lay in the days of your youth” (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 265–66).

- 1807 Born on March 1 at Avon (currently Farmington), Connecticut, to Aphek Woodruff and Beulah Thompson Woodruff
- 1833 Age 26, baptized in an icy stream near Richland, New York, on December 31
- 1834–36 Ages 27–29, serves a mission to the southern United States

- 1837 Age 30, marries Phoebe Carter on April 13; she dies in 1885
- 1837–38 Ages 30–31, serves a mission to the eastern United States and the Fox Islands
- 1839 Age 32, ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young on April 26
- 1839–41 Ages 32–34, serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1843 Age 36, serves a mission to the eastern United States
- 1844–46 Ages 36–39, serves as president of the European Mission
- 1847 Age 40, enters Great Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young on July 24
- 1887 Age 80, leads the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve at John Taylor’s death on July 25
- 1888 Age 81, dedicates Manti Utah Temple on May 17
- 1889 Age 82, sustained as President of the Church on April 7; keeps as counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith
- 1890 Age 83, issues Manifesto on September 24 after receiving a revelation to discontinue the practice of plural marriage
- 1893 Age 86, dedicates the Salt Lake Temple on April 6
- 1898 Age 91, dies on September 2 in San Francisco, California, after nine years as President of the Church

## Summary

Wilford Woodruff, fourth President of the Church, quickly recognized the truth of the gospel and was baptized two days after hearing the message. He entered the Great Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young on July 24, 1847. He taught the young people

“to listen to the voice of God and obey it.” He said to them, “Your eternal destiny for time and eternity, will in a great measure depend upon the foundation which you lay in the days of your youth.”

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS